

## **Status Report of Legacy Project's Statewide Wetlands Inventory – July 31, 2003**

Please note that the following report is divided up among work tasks and geographic areas. (This is to coincide with our work plan.) Because of the size of the wetlands inventory and the short time that we have to complete it, the Legacy Project has sought support of government agencies and NGOs. Thus far we have begun to work with the US Fish and Wildlife Service (National Wetlands Inventory, Western Region Office), State Coastal Conservancy, Department of Fish and Games, Southern California Coastal Water Research Project (SCCWRP), California Coastal Commission, California Prison Industry Authority, US Environmental Protection Agency, the San Francisco Estuary Institute, the San Francisco Estuary Project and others. Collaboration with these organizations has been in the form of either contractor, funder, data provider, or a combination of any of these.

### **A. North Coast Update:**

- 1) U.C. Davis has been identified as a potential contractor to map 53 North Coast NWI quads, and San Francisco State University has been identified as potential contractor to map 22 NWI quads south (coastal) of San Francisco Bay.
- 2) U.C. Davis and San Francisco State University have provided the NWI with cost estimates for their respective work areas. NWI staff is currently working on finalizing agreements with the two universities.
- 3) NWI staff will be providing photo interpretation and wetlands mapping training to both universities this summer. The first training was held at San Francisco State on June 24 and 25. A second training session is being planned for late August at U.C. Davis. Four stereoscopes will be lent for the project - two to each university.

### **B. Central Coast Update:**

- 1) The California Coastal Commission received a \$312,531 grant from the US EPA 104(b) Wetlands Development Grant program in FY 2002 to develop the Central Coast Comprehensive Wetlands GIS Database Project (CCWGIS). The project is a collaborative comprised of the California Coastal Commission, the Morro Bay National Estuary Program, and the California Conservation Corps. The CCWGIS will provide descriptive and spatial wetland information from a watershed perspective in an online, interactive database and geographic information system (GIS) to local and state agencies, non-government organizations, and educators.
- 2) As part of CCWGIS, the Coastal Commission has partnered with the California Conservation Corps to map wetlands in the Morro Bay Watershed (Phase I). The Conservation Corps has decided to use the Cowardin wetlands classification system in addition to the HGM classification system being developed for the statewide wetlands inventory. Fieldwork to support the mapping commenced last month.
- 3) Phase II will expand the scope of work conducted in Phase I by incorporating 4 - 5 more central coast watersheds into the CCWGIS framework. Completion of Phase I is scheduled for October 2004.

### **C. South Coast Update:**

- 1) The NWI Regional Office in Portland is currently updating California Central/Southern Coast coverages from Piedras Blancas to Santa Monica. Of the 41 quads along this section of coast: 10 draft maps are complete and have passed regional quality control. Of the remaining 31, wetland delineations of the estuarine and palustrine wetlands have been completed. Because these delineations include the majority of wetlands on each quad NWI staff estimate that this project is approximately 60% complete.
- 2) The Southern California Coastal Water Research Project (SCCWRP) received a \$200K grant from the US EPA 104(b)Wetlands Development Grant program in FY 2001 to develop a regional monitoring program for wetlands in Southern California. Major tasks include 1) the co-development with San Francisco Bay and Central Coast of the California Rapid Assessment Methodology (CRAM), and 2) funding to work with NWI in updating and ground-truthing South Coast estuarine wetlands, and 3) a database infrastructure to make maps available through an on-line, interactive GIS server such as the Southern California Wetland Recovery Project Information Station ([www.eudora.berkeley.edu/wrpinfo](http://www.eudora.berkeley.edu/wrpinfo)). A provisional CRAM is expected to be completed in February 2004. SCCWRP has been working with NWI and other collaborators on a set of hydrogeomorphic modifiers to attribute polygons in NWI wetland maps.
- 3) SCCWRP received a \$105K grant from NOAA Coastal Services Center and a \$50K grant from USGS GAP Analysis Program to develop methods to map riparian areas in Southern California. Major activities associated with these grants include the development of a methodology to map riparian geomorphic boundaries, and comparison of manual interpretation versus computational methods for classifying remote sensing data to map riparian vegetation. SCCWRP is working to have NWI demonstrate their riparian mapping methods in two watersheds in southern California. All riparian mapping efforts being undertaken by SCCWRP are being considered and coordinated with the Riparian Habitat Joint Venture.
- 4) SCCWRP received word on 5/15/03 that it will be receiving \$200K FY 2002 grant funds from US EPA to continue developing a regional monitoring program in Southern California. Major tasks include 1) mapping of freshwater wetlands and riparian areas, and 2) validation of CRAM in southern California wetlands. Work will begin in September 2003.
- 5) Legacy staff and NWI staff met with UCLA faculty on 5/2/03 to discuss the possibility of the NWI contracting with the university to update NWI maps. The first potential project for the university is the updating of 30 quads in Ventura County. This project would be funded by a state/federal Coastal Impact Assistance Program grant to the County of Ventura. **Note: As of November, 2003, the decision was made to establish a southern mapping "hub" at CSUN, instead of UCLA.**

#### D. Bay Area:

- 1) On February 12, 2003 SFEI staff and NWI staff crosswalked SFEI digital data into standard NWI categories and data files. The crosswalked data will update current NWI data for tidal wetlands in 34 Bay Area quads. The crosswalked data are currently undergoing final review by NWI QA/QC staff in Florida and are anticipated to be available for download from the NWI website within a month.

- 2) In February of this year, SFEI in conjunction with the Association of Bay Area Governments and the Resources Agency, submitted a grant proposal to US EPA for funding under its 104(b) Wetlands Development Grant Program to continue Bay Area implementation of the CRAM. Among other things, the proposal included a \$127,000 request in funding for updating and expanding NWI non-tidal coverage of San Francisco Bay. Word was received on 5/15/03 that US EPA will be providing grant funding to the project. Potential contractors for the mapping are SFEI and/or San Francisco State and the anticipated start date is mid-September.
- 3) A collaborative including SFEI, SCCWRP, Coastal Commission, and the Resources Agency submitted a grant proposal to the State Water Resources Control Board for the CRAM on 5/9/03. Among other things, the proposal included a request of \$1.545 million to further map coastal wetlands and riparian areas in the Bay Area, South Coast, and Central Coast using the Cowardin classification system. **This grant proposal was rejected by the State Board. No justification given.**

D. Mojave:

- 1) In the Mojave Desert Project Area, 106 digital draft maps are in the process of being reviewed by NWI regional and national quality control staff. 32 maps are considered final and have been posted for download on the NWI website. 51 maps are being drafted at present and should be completed within the next 2 months. The NWI Regional Office in Portland anticipates all 189 maps will be finalized and posted for download on the NWI website by the end of the federal fiscal year '03. All 189 maps will include both wetland and riparian classifications.

E. Digitizing:

- 1) In total 701 NWI hard copy maps will be digitized. A digitizing pilot project of 12 maps from the Crescent City area was initiated in December of 2002 with the California Prison Industry Authority (PIA). All digitizing is being coordinated by the Legacy Project, NWI, and the Coastal Conservancy. On March 14<sup>th</sup> the NWI center in St. Petersburg, Florida deemed the pilot project satisfactory and complete.
- 3) A second purchase order was entered in February with PIA to digitize 98 additional US FWS high priority quads. This work is scheduled to be completed by the end of June. NWI QA/QC will follow.
- 4) Currently, the Coastal Conservancy is drafting a contract with PIA to digitize the remaining 591 quads. Completion of this work is scheduled for the end of 2003.

F. Identification and Acquisition of Existing Aerial Photography:

- 1) In June the Legacy Project contracted with the consulting firm of Jones and Stokes to conduct a survey of existing aerial photography in local cities, counties, Councils of Governments and selected special districts and agencies. The results of this survey are scheduled to be released later this year. **We expect results next week (12-15-03).**